

April 24, 2019

Sound Transit Board of Directors
Mr. Peter Rogoff, CEO
401 S Jackson St
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Rogoff and Boardmembers:

We are writing to express support for reforming Sound Transit's fare enforcement program. We appreciate the recent discussion of and attention to this urgent equity issue at the March 28th board meeting and the April 16th Regional Transit Committee meeting. As a next step in this process, we would like to request that Sound Transit work closely with impacted communities, advocates, and agency partners, in order to achieve regional consistency and more equitable outcomes.

While Sound Transit currently conducts fare enforcement similarly to many agencies around the country, [recent studies](#) suggest that these practices lead to inequitable outcomes by race, immigration status, income, and housing status, are conducted at significant cost to the public, and have questionable effectiveness in reducing fare evasion. Faced with new evidence, [a number of agencies](#) across the country, including Portland's TriMet, Washington D.C.'s Metro, and King County Metro have begun to reform their fare enforcement practices.

We hope that Sound Transit can make similar policy and program shifts based on the needs of its riders. We are encouraged by the work of the new Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Equity & Inclusion. We are thrilled to hear that an internal Sound Transit workgroup has begun discussing fare enforcement reform and that the agency also plans to develop a broader equity policy. As this work progresses, we ask you to consider the following:

1. **Engage with impacted communities and advocates throughout Sound Transit's tri-county district.** Equitable outcomes and program success are most achievable with community engagement and buy-in. This includes directly engaging, through focus groups, surveys, interviews, and/or a steering committee process, with riders who are disproportionately impacted by the outcomes of fare enforcement interactions and citations.
2. **As part of this engagement, use fare enforcement interactions to better understand upstream issues.** While designing a new approach, enter a period of "Education Mode" where Fare Enforcement Officers conduct a brief survey with riders who cannot show proof of payment, instead of issuing a warning or citation. This is an opportunity to collect information on causes of fare non-payment and invite rider participation in program design, as well as to inform riders of existing reduced fare programs.
3. **Collaborate with partner agencies.** With the close integration of Sound Transit Link Light Rail and current and future bus service throughout the tri-county district, consistency of fare enforcement policies across these agencies reduces rider confusion.

This is an important opportunity to engage authentically with the community and advance values of equity and inclusion by making sure that our regional transportation system works for all people, regardless of race, immigration status, income, housing status, gender, LGBTQ+ status and more. The public's investments in the transit network has the potential to transform the prosperity, health, and sustainability

of our region for the better — and a primary duty of the agency is to ensure the greatest number of people can benefit from these investments and that the institutional power of Sound Transit is oriented toward access, justice, and equity.

Sincerely,

Puget Sound Sage

**Seattle/King County Coalition
on Homelessness**

Transit Riders Union

Transportation Choices Coalition

One America

350 Seattle

Mother Nation

Asian Counseling & Referral Services

Puyallup Watershed Initiative Active Transportation
Community of Interest

Ballard Community Task Force
on Homelessness and Hunger

Rainier Beach Action Coalition

Casa Latina

Real Change

Cascade Bicycle Club

Rooted in Rights

Cham Refugee Community

Seattle Debre Mihret St. Michael Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo Church

Chief Seattle Club

Seattle Human Services Coalition

Church Council of Greater Seattle

Seattle Indian Health Board

Coalition to End Urban Indigenous Homelessness

Seattle Indian Services Commission

Colectiva Legal del Pueblo

Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Downtown on the Go

Seattle Subway

East African Community Services

Seattle Women's Commission

El Centro de la Raza

Sierra Club

Front and Centered

Tacoma-Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium

FUSE Washington

Tenants Union of Washington State

Futurewise

UAW 4121

Got Green

UFCW 21

Homesight

United Indians

Housing Development Consortium

Washington CAN

Interim CDA

Youth Care

LGBTQ Allyship